The Pulpit

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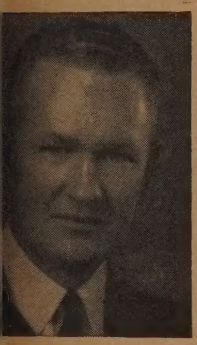
OLUME XVI CHICAGO, MARCH, 1945 NUMBER 3

The Bridge of Prayer

BY LLOYD ELLIS FOSTER

Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. The ectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth ich. James 5:13,16.

RELIGIOUS THINKING needs visual aids. To grasp profound spiritual meaning, we need vivid ages which will interpret to our minds the hidden ıth. Both the Old and the New Testaments are rich in colorful images. No portion of the Old Testament matches the 23rd Psalm in its lovely imagery—God, the tender "shepherd" who makes us to lie down in "green pastures" beside the "still waters." When we turn to the New Testament, we find there a single symbol—the cross. It is used to symbolize God's redemptive quest to reach and restore men through the life and death of Jesus. The cross appeals to the eye; whereas, ɔrds can appeal only to the ear. Wherever we see a ɔss, whether against the gaunt skyline of a great city, against the simple quietness of a village, we are rended of the gracious and constant love of God which ɛks and follows us, no matter where we may be.



The image I wish to use in this devotional study is at of a bridge. Gilbert Thomas has written a simple em called "The Unseen Bridge":

> There is a bridge, whereof the span
> Is rooted in the heart of man,
> And reaches, without pile or rod,
> Unto the Great White Throne of God.
> Its traffic is in human sighs
> Fervently wafted to the skies;
> 'Tis the one pathway from despair;
> And it is called the Bridge of Prayer.

Prayer is a bridge from the heart of man to the rone of God. Over it passes a stream of traffic—man sighs, human desires, human longings. As never fore in our experience, this bridge is being used by ɔse who wait anxiously at home, and by those sent erseas. It links us together and to the living God. It the one pathway from despair and hopelessness.

James, the brother of Jesus, wrote an Epistle noted r its pithy sentences and its practical suggestions. In e last chapter he talks about prayer. He raises the estion: "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray." hen he concludes with this conviction: "The effectual, rvent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." To-y we know what it means to be afflicted. We are anxious for loved ones. The war has laid stern responsibilities upon all of us. The future seems insecure and uncertain. "Well," declares James, "when life is like that, pray." And when you pray, be assured that prayer which stems from consistent Christian living has the power to change lives and situations.

I

Bridges are built; they don't just happen.

Whenever you see a great suspension bridge arching gracefully across a river, and bearing upon it heavy traffic, you may be sure the bridge is not the result of accident or of chance. Financial experts estimated its cost. Patient engineers carefully planned every detail. Workmen laboriously erected it. Such a bridge is the product of engineering skill, plus human and mechanical energy.

Some years ago I was living in Philadelphia when a great suspension bridge was built across the Delaware river connecting Philadelphia and Camden. It began, I observed, by a single wire being threaded across the river. Then the wire was shuttled back and forth until it became a mighty cable, capable of supporting tremendous weight. The first wire, alone, had little strength; multiplied a thousandfold, it could sustain the weight of trucks and streetcars. Prayer is like that. It may begin as a simple cry of need. It may be only a phrase, "O God, help me in my trouble!" But as Christian experience unfolds, the single wire becomes a giant cable linking the one who prays to the God of power. And the cable becomes so strong that nothing can break it, neither danger nor loss; not even death!

Now by this analogy I do not wish to suggest that a mere repetition of prayers has value. There are those who hold the strange notion that the more times a prayer is said the greater its effectiveness. Therefore it becomes a Christian duty, they think, to say a prayer over and over until the number of times it is repeated becomes impressive. They fail to sense the subtle spiritual peril in such a practice. They assume wrongly that God is moved by much speaking. It is not the number of prayers that counts; but it is the quality of the prayer, its earnestness, sincerity and expectancy. Mere repetition of prayers destroys the element of trust which is the main condition of effective praying. The simple cry, "O God, help me in my trouble!" may carry more real trust and dependence than another prayer repeated a hundred times in machine-like fashion. James implies, when he says that the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, that the total spiritual impact of a praying person is beyond measure.

Creative prayer is an acquired art. No one is born with a special gift for prayer. Each one of us began to pray by threading simple words together on some desire

which we expressed to God. To pray so effectively that our inner attitude is changed, or other lives affected, is the result of spiritual discipline and faithful effort. It is as much an acquired art as playing the violin. Few of us can play the violin because its mastery requires a price in musical appreciation and manual skill we are unwilling to pay. Likewise, few of us become artists in prayer because we will not give it the time or thought which it demands. That prayer is an acquired art is suggested by the request the disciples made to Jesus: "Lord, teach us how to pray." That is, show us how to relate ourselves so directly to God's power that we become skilled in releasing it.

If prayer is an acquired art, as I have been saying, then it is not something that can be summoned in an emergency. By that I do not mean that God does not respond to sinful men who in their extremity call upon him. His response, of course, is determined by their sincerity—whether they really mean business in their relation to God. However, God's response in such an emergency is limited by the individual's spiritual neglect. Years of prayerlessness block God's larger response. The person who makes prayer a daily practice, who thinks of God as a powerful friend, will have immediate and constant help for his need. To put it succinctly, if you neglect prayer, you will not experience the power of prayer. Effective prayer is an acquired art.

II

Bridges are built to carry traffic.

Bridges are built for one purpose. They are built to bear traffic. They are not erected as ornaments to grace a beautiful landscape, nor as experiments in engineering science. The bridge is a sturdy pathway. It enables people to get to their work quickly in the morning. It brings them back safely at night when they are weary and long for the rest and refreshment of their homes. The bridge of prayer is also meant to bear the traffic of busy, heavily burdened lives. This is what James implied when he asked, "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray." To be afflicted is to be in trouble. It is to face insecurity and uncertainty. It is to carry in one's heart an ache of longing for those who mean most, and whose absence adds to life's burden.

In like manner, life places on each of us a load of concern for others. This is an inescapable assignment of life. Someone has said that to live is to be in relation to—that is, connected with—persons or things. In this period of separation we are keenly aware of how importantly our lives are interknit with other lives. In them we live, and move, and have our being. Can you picture all the strands of affection and concern radiating from human lives in America to absent loved ones scattered throughout the world? If you could see these strands, you would see a vast network of connecting influences touching millions of lives and coloring their thinking and feeling.

It is at this point that prayer has such profound meaning. By means of it, we convey to God our deepest desires and longings. The faith we express becomes the means of releasing power and strength for our loved ones far away. God responds through this vast network of communicating minds. The one wh prays shares his burden with One who declared: "Com unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and will give you rest." The one prayed for finds his lif encircled by influences which may nerve and steady hir when he needs them most. Thus prayer becomes a grea bridge linking us to God and to our loved ones.

Prayer is desperately needed at another point, tha of our universal sense of insecurity. War threatens th values and verities of the past. There is a revolutionar upthrust in the life of the world of which we all ar aware. Vast changes are taking place in the structur of human society. But our feeling of global insecurit has been intensified by the precariousness of our ind vidual lives. If bombs do not threaten American lif adversities, frustrations, sickness and death do.

Now prayer gives us security in the face of ins curity, permanence in the midst of change. Becaus God is our Heavenly Father, we, his children, know w have value in his sight. Because of God's interest an care, we are sure that the real part of us, our conscio selves, cannot be destroyed by physical disability, or b illness, or by death. The security that we crave mo deeply is not that of the body but of the mind. All c us know that our bodies are borrowed from nature an must return to nature. In our most searching momen we want to feel that our spirits have value and pe manence in the scheme of things. Prayer increas our conviction that though our bodies may be destroye by some outer force, yet the inner self, which feels an seeks and loves, is immortal. The bridge of faith, w are confident, spans the chasm of death. When w pray, we know that no matter how angry and sulle may be the stream below, this bridge of trust in Go will carry us safely over.

Nothing can break our connection with God, nothin but our careless neglect or our willful disobedienc We have the sure conviction of an unbroken connectio with God. "If God be for us, who can be again us?" Paul in this profound insight states the who matter clearly. Therefore, let us strengthen our co nection with God by means of daily and persisten prayer. And as we pray, we will find anxiety fo loved ones lessened. Prayer will not guarantee the physical protection, but it will give us the assuran that the most important thing about them, their spiri the part of them that has greatest meaning for yo can never be destroyed.

Grasp, then, with both hands, this security whic prayer offers. Rely on it when you go to sleep at nigh and consider it when you awaken in the morning. was this which Matthew Henry had in mind when h wrote, "Let prayer be the key of the morning and th bolt of the evening." Let prayer open for you the doo of expectancy in the morning, and let it give you inn quietness and security as you fall asleep.

III

Use the bridge of prayer.

Many Christians are really materialistic in that th assume that most of the great changes which take pla in the world are physical. These physical changes a

expressed in towering skyscrapers, highly organized factories, swiftly flying airplanes. We forget that the most important changes are in human personalities, in the attitudes that emerge and the moods which make life seem bright or dark. These changes are taking place constantly, often unnoticed, but they are of great importance in the life of the world. We now sense how important ideas can be when we recall that an Austrian paperhanger seized the idea of Aryan superiority, and it became the motivating power that has affected the whole world.

Now, ideas in the spiritual realm are tremendously important. Prayer is a spiritual idea, the belief that faith and trust in God release energies and influences which profoundly change human lives. But to release this power certain conditions must be met. First, the prayer must be in accordance with God's will. John in his first Epistle states this law in very simple words: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything *according to his will,* he heareth us." God's response to your prayer will always be in keeping with his character. His character is constant and dependable. He does things in certain ways. For instance, I have never heard of an arm that had been amputated, being restored through prayer. That God could restore it seems reasonable, but it is not his way of responding.

We will save ourselves a great deal of trouble if we will think of prayer as pertaining primarily to the inner life, rather than to the physical aspect of life. When you pray, therefore, ask that it be granted if it is in accordance with God's will. Another law of prayer is that to be effective it must flow out of consistent Christian living. James asserts this when he says that the effectual, fervent prayer of a *righteous man* availeth much. That power prayer releases can never rise above the level of our Christian living. Wrong acts and wrong attitudes toward other people always block the power of prayer.

Lastly, creative prayer rests on the element of trust. "And all these things," said Jesus, "whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, *believing,* ye shall receive." Asking is not nearly as important as believing. Believing opens the doors of our personalities to God's presence and power. Thus we see that prayer doesn't change God; it changes us. God can do things for us when we believe that he cannot do otherwise. Real belief, which includes humility and reliance and love, makes it possible for God to trust us with the gifts of prayer.

In a measure we Christians are the custodians of spiritual energies released through prayer. If this is so, then we should pray for the Christian cause. The Christian cause I have in mind has no denominational label; it is much larger than that. It is God's great redemptive attempt, working through Christian men and women, to bring about spiritual and social changes in individuals and in the life of the world.

On the whole, we are neglecting this mighty means of spiritual improvement. Most of our praying is personal and local. We are lacking in vision and perspective. Therefore we are content to pray for small changes. We need Luther's grasp of prayer. He declared: "Prayer is a powerful thing; for God has bound and tied himself thereto." Each of us can use this bridge of prayer as it relates to the Christian cause. Let us pray for the cause of Christ throughout the world: that the missionary effort may touch more lives with its healing and enlightening power; that the church in America may unite in a common endeavor to bring spiritual health to the nation; that a peace may come after the dark tragedy of war which shall be built on justice and understanding and good will.

No one of us can face the changes and crises of life and keep the banner of courage and conviction flying high without the resources of prayer. Our aloneness makes it impossible. "When we pray," writes Dr. Alexis Carrel, one of the great medical scientists of our day, "we link ourselves with the inexhaustible motive power that spins the universe." It is heartening to realize that the God to whom we pray for courage and strength to meet our personal dilemmas is the Being who sustains the universe. His spiritual power—that is, his ability to respond to our human needs—is as great as his physical power, which operates the universe. No wonder, then, that when men meet the conditions of prayer, they feel an inner exhilaration to be found nowhere else. Tolstoy observed that every time the thought of God came to him, there came an uprush of vital energy within him, and life took on meaning and beauty.

Therefore, let us use the bridge of prayer. Its span, rooting in our hearts, reaches unto the Great White Throne of God. Let those at home who carry anxiety in their hearts, with all its disquieting pressure, use the bridge of prayer. Let those in the service of country, in training in the homeland or at sea or in the air or on battlefields, use the bridge of prayer. It will carry the heaviest traffic of your heart—your longings, your fears, your hopes. It links you with God, and nothing can break this connection if you are true to him. "Praise the bridge," runs an old proverb, "which carries you over."

As we petition God for the needs of our lives, let us also praise him for the bridge of prayer. It will always carry us over.

There is a bridge, whereof the span
Is rooted in the heart of man,
And reaches, without pile or rod,
Unto the Great White Throne of God.
Its traffic is in human sighs
Fervently wafted to the skies;
'Tis the one pathway from despair;
And it is called the Bridge of Prayer.

Sentence Sermons

Sin is fatal in all languages.

So many people call it their bad luck when their wild oats go to seed in their fields.

Any man can again have the joy of his first meeting with God if he will go back over the same road.

No man is ever more than four steps from God—conviction, repentance, consecration and faith.

Roy L. Smith.

'Through Jesus Christ Our Lord'

By Ralph W. Sockman

Through Jesus Christ Our Lord.

A GOOD MANY years ago a Hebrew lad was learning to read his sacred Scriptures. He struggled through the sentences, picking out one by one the words in the ancient characters. By and by he would come to a word of four letters, and boy-like he would begin to spell. "No," his father would say, "do not say that. That word is not said. Say *Adonai*" — which means "the Lord." For centuries the Jew has never said that name of four letters, but always "the Lord."

This Jewish lad grew up. He studied to be a rabbi. In the midst of his student days there appeared in Jerusalem a revolutionary sect. They were the followers of one Jesus of Nazareth, who had been crucified as a blasphemer, but who according to his disciples' claims had risen from the dead. This sect so angered the young rabbinical student, whose name was Saul, that he tried to stamp it out. But his persecutions failed to fire the followers of Jesus into hatred or to dampen their faith. Saul saw one of them, a man named Stephen, as he was being stoned to death, and he saw Stephen lift up his eyes and say with beatific smile, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God."

Saul's mind was haunted by the strange power of this Jesus. What secret did he possess which enabled him to give his followers peace and joy in the midst of pain and death? Saul could not escape the hounding pursuit of this thought. At last it caught up with him on the Damascus road, and Saul surrendered himself to the will of the Christ, thereby being transformed from a hater to a follower of Jesus.

Then it became Paul's turn to be hounded and persecuted. His family turned from him in sorrow. His life became one long series of sufferings and trials. And yet, out of all these harrowing experiences, a conviction was being formed in his mind that at last One had appeared worthy to bear the name of Lord, the word which stood for those four letters too sacred for him to pronounce as a Jew. Thus Paul's letters came to be filled with references to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Nineteen centuries have passed since Paul's day. Men have pondered this tangled skein of experience called life. The world in which we live wears an enigmatic face—a face as ugly as sin and as beautiful as an angel, as cruel as a sea in storm and as tender as a woman in love. It is a world of snakes and stars, of laughter and tears, a world of contradictions and confusion. Some have said this world's life is "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury signifying nothing." But better judgment has contended that this medley of events has behind it a Creator with a purpose and a program.

Out of this confusing sequence of history, centuries of seasoned thought have selected one flaming section as the key of the whole book of life. It is the brief biography of Jesus, that strange man on the cross, who from his blood-stained throne has so ruled the hearts of men that they, like Paul, say, "the Lord Jesus Christ." In his character we see the highest we know or can imagine and therefore we too believe that in beholding him we see the Father also. In his life of love we see the most heavenly revelation of life's possibilities. Therefore we conclude that God must be like him. And so we begin our Apostles' Creed with the statement, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord." And the prayers which we repeat in our rituals we conclude with the words, "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

As we think of Christ as King and Lord, I want to ask what it does to our prayers to conclude them with the words, "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

I

First of all, when we pray "through Jesus Christ our Lord," the words give us an invitation to pray.

Does it ever seem to you that prayer is a rather presumptuous thing on our part? Here is God with a whole world on his hands, a world of some two billion souls. Moreover, he has millions of other heavenly planets in his universe. Why should I presume to bother him with my little personal problems? When we think of the Creator with his innumerable concerns, we feel perhaps as did the little boy who said, "God is like my father, he is too busy to listen." Isn't it presumptuous for us to take our affairs to God in prayer?

Furthermore, is not prayer a sign of weakness on my part? Here am I, an adult person. Ought I not to handle my own affairs and not childishly carry them to God for his help? A minister some years ago said that the only person in the community who can talk about God without causing something of a sensation is the preacher. If for instance at a directors' meeting down in a business office, the president of the board should say, "Let us ask God's guidance," the suspicion would spread that the business must be heading for the rocks. Yes, for us to stop and pray in the midst of a business meeting or a social gathering would create a mild sensation, an awkward pause to say the least. Some of us blush to be caught at prayers. To many it seems presumptuous, or weak, or pious.

But not when we pray, "through Jesus Christ our Lord." Christ invites us to pray. He makes it as natural as a child turning to a father. He teaches us to pray, saying, "Our Father." When we close our eyes in prayer, of what or whom do we think? Well, what do we think when we close our eyes to pray? Dale Carnegie has said that one reason why we do not better remember the names of the persons we meet is that when we meet them we are thinking of ourselves rather than of them. Perhaps that is one trouble with our

praying. When we meet God in prayer we are thinking of ourselves. But Christ taught us when we pray to say "Our Father," and to think of God and not of ourselves.

And when we do think of God, how do we behold him? I confess frankly that God becomes vivid and personal to me only as I think of him in the image and spirit of Christ. When I see God "through Jesus Christ our Lord" I see a God who cares, cares as did the father of the prodigal who longed for his boy's return. I see not only a God who cares, but one who also knows me. A college student once said to her professor of religion: "What I really want to know is this, does God know my name?" Well, our gospel says that he does. The very hairs of our head are all numbered. The God who notes the sparrow's fall takes notice of us, for we are of more value than many sparrows. When I pray, I am not pleading my case before an implacable judge in a cold court of justice, I am talking to a Heavenly Father who knows and understands.

Moreover, he is a Father who believes in me—even when my faith is too thin to believe in him. In A. J. Cronin's book, *The Keys of the Kingdom,* which was a best seller some two years ago, there is a conversation between a young Scottish physician and a Roman Catholic priest. The young doctor was an agnostic. He could never be quite convinced by theological arguments that God exists. But he went out to China to help cure the plague which was raging. In his efforts to heal he contracted the disease and lay dying. As he gasps his last breaths he says to the priest, "I still can't believe in God." The priest tenderly replies: "Does that matter now? He believes in you."

Yes, when we pray "through Jesus Christ our Lord" we see a God who cares and knows and understands and believes in us. Thus Christ makes prayer inviting.

II

Secondly, when we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, we have a test for our praying.

Some time ago I heard a minister tell how he helped a tense and troubled business man to get God's help. He told him to eat a good lunch, then lie down, stretch out to his full length, relax every muscle, and say, "Now, God, this is your problem, too. Help me to solve it." Well, I always feel better if I can eat a good lunch, lie down, stretch out and relax. But I am not quite sure just how much God is in that process. Jesus did not pray in just that fashion. We read that in the wilderness Jesus fasted and prayed. We read that in Gethsemane Jesus sweat great drops of blood. No, prayer, as Jesus taught it, means surrendering our wills to God's will, and that means more than relaxing the muscles and stretching out the body. It means saying, "Not my will but thine be done," and that's a pretty hard struggle sometimes.

So much of the current talk about prayer leaves Christ out of the process. Prayer is treated as a power after the analogy of the radio. Here is God's power pervading the universe as these ether waves penetrate the air. Just tune in. Just desire hard enough and you can get anything you want. Well now, suppose we could. Suppose that each of us who are listening could by wishing strongly enough, and invoking God hard enough, receive anything we wanted. What confusion we should have if we could all lobby the Heavenly Throne with our personal interests!

But when we pray "through Jesus Christ our Lord," we cannot ask for just anything our hearts desire. Christ said, "whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." Not everything can be asked for in Christ's name, can it? I can pray for help in my business problem "through Jesus Christ our Lord," provided my business is designed to further the good of men and the program of Christ on earth. I can pray for health "through Jesus Christ our Lord," provided I desire that strength not merely to prolong my own self-indulgence, but to serve my fellow men. I can pray for victory in this war "through Jesus Christ our Lord," provided I believe that the victory of our side will further the reign of righteousness and good will on the earth. I can pray "through Jesus Christ our Lord" for the safety of my boy or girl at the front, provided I am not selfishly thinking of my own family's welfare and forgetting the welfare of other parents' sons and daughters. Yes, when we pray "through Jesus Christ our Lord," selfish motives are sifted from our petitions.

More than that—it lifts the sights of our prayers. When we pray in the name of Christ, our horizons are enlarged toward the unattainable. His perfection makes us aim at the impossible. He said, "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." Of course we cannot be perfect in this life, but we can pray and strive toward perfection. He taught us to pray: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Of course, God's Kingdom will not come fully here on this earth. But if we stop striving for it, what happens? The paradox of life is this, that unless we strive toward the impossible we never realize the possible. Recall King David. He desired to conquer the enemies of his people, to establish his capital at Jerusalem to unite his nation, and to build a worthy temple to his God. David never built the temple, but because he strove for that which was beyond him he was enabled to achieve that which was within his reach. Great lives are never self-contained.

When we pray "through Jesus Christ our Lord," our reach exceeds our grasp, but that is what heaven is for. And that is what will make earth more and more like heaven. We need Christ to sift our prayers and lift their sights toward perfection.

III

Thirdly, when we pray "through Jesus Christ our Lord," we get power in our praying. For one thing we get the strength which comes through confidence in the rightness of Christ. If you ever had the experience of being lost in a strange region you know how much difference it makes to feel that your guide knows the way. If you have confidence in your guide, a strength comes into your limbs to keep you going. But if you doubt your guide's knowledge, then you lose heart and weariness overtakes you. Well, however bewildered we

are by the confusion of our world, we at least know that Christ is right. He is our Lord, the Son of God. Other leaders may falter and change but Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, today and forever." Oh, men may think him wrong. They do so in every generation. A generation ago Nietzsche, the German philosopher, said that to follow Christ would make slaves of any nation. So he persuaded the German people to repudiate the principles of the Christ. And what happened? Germany turned to militarism and was beaten, while Nietzsche himself died in a madhouse. Every generation has those who call Christ a foolish dreamer, but eventually men wake up to find that it was they who were dreaming while Christ saw the truth. One generation turns from Christ, but the force of circumstances pulls their children back to him as the one hope.

Moreover, Christ gives us power not only through his own rightness but also by imparting to us a faith that we too can reach toward his rightness. Harold Blake Walker of Oklahoma City says that his own father once gave him a glimpse into the meaning of Christ's redemptive love. In his boyhood he had taken piano lessons. His teacher was giving a program with her pupils as the participants. He himself was to play a few chords and then swing into a little piece entitled "Moonlight on the Waters." He sat down to the piano. In his fright he struck the chords in rather miserable fashion. He looked over at his father whose face was glum and at his mother who was on the verge of tears. His performance was pretty bad and he finished with a feeling of mortification. On the way home his father said to him, "Son, I know you can play those chords and 'Moonlight on the Waters,' and as long as we know it, what do we care about anything else?"

What that father said to his son is somewhat like what Christ interprets God as saying to us. God knows what we can do, and he makes us feel that if he knows it and we know it, why worry about what others think and say?

When we pray "through Jesus Christ our Lord," we feel ourselves in the presence of a heavenly Father who believes in us, who banks on us, who so loved us that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but shall have everlasting life." In that feeling we can do all things through him who strengthens us. A modern novel makes a devoted wife say to her faithless husband: "We will face this thing together, you and I, until we win over it." That is what Jesus Christ our Lord says to us at this Lenten season.

Once the whole Christian movement depended on a few men around a supper table in an upper room; but now a great heritage is ours, and millions of us have caught at least a little of his spirit and meaning, who sat that night at the table's head.

Harry Emerson Fosdick.

It is easier to act your way into right thinking than to think your way into right acting.

E. Stanley Jones.

The Magnetic Cross

By A. Gordon Nasby

I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all me unto me. John 12:32.

SINCE the cross was erected on Calvary the ey of the civilized world have been drawn to Jesu Ancient philosophers used to tell of a mountain of lod stone. The magnetic properties of this mountain were great that objects which neare the mountain were drawn to Ships at sea had nails pulle from their timbers as th passed, and sank.

Christ has exerted a magnet pull on mankind by his cros even as he said, "I, if I lifted up will draw all men un me."

An English author has told how, early in his career, eve British author wrote with ey fastened on a far off islet in t southern seas where Robert Louis Stevenson live Each writer was conscious of the excellence of Steve son's ability and hoped as he wrote that his work wou not be found unworthy by the eminent author. "Sure another age," he writes, "will wonder over this curiosi of letters that for five years the needle of litera endeavor in Great Britain has quivered toward a litt island in the South Pacific as to its magnetic pole What Sir Arthur Quiller Couch, the distinguish man of letters, said regarding the influence of Steve son on literary folk applies to Jesus as concerning people in every generation.

WHAT WOULD JESUS SAY?

The influence of Christ is to be found in our stan ards of character. The highest test that a man m apply to his actions is earnestly to inquire, "Wh would Jesus say?" The very existence of Jesus has be a stimulus to the thought of humanity. His personali is the most baffling problem with which men have h to wrestle.

There is much in the life and influence of Jesus validate the theology which has grown up about hi "The word became flesh," wrote John, "and dw among us." It is quite impossible to treat the Calva drama as simply another episode of history. Its implic tions are too great. Many men have died deaths on t cross; not a few have willingly suffered for an idea but Christ's cross takes on meaning through the clust of other evidences that surround it. Without the resu rection, says St. Paul, the cross is unrelieved trage and God himself is as good as dead. There was cosmic aspect to Calvary.

Indeed, with Jesus what the Scriptures claim hi to be, it is only natural that the cross of Christ has universal power of attraction. More than that, t cross was a fact of world-shaking proportions wi which each individual must deal.

In the drama of Good Friday all sorts of folk are oted—the heartbroken, the rude and uncouth member f the mob, the criminal, men who hated Jesus, those vho were indifferent, and those who seemed simply o be caught in strange, unpleasant circumstances. In he original Calvary we see our own world, for our vorld too must make its decision concerning Christ.

CALVARY IS CONTEMPORARY

It is not possible for modern man to avoid the Good Friday choice. Good Friday was not an isolated day. Calvary had its implications for us moderns. The intervening centuries have preserved the presence and voice f Christ and the sharply drawn details of Calvary with uch clarity that we today feel that Calvary is a contemporary event.

The cross of Christ must evoke from us some kind of eaction. We cannot go completely unaffected by Jesus. A widely known scientist claims that when a little child hrows his teddy-bear out of the crib he disturbs the nost distant star. In such a world the cross of Christ s not an inconsequential matter.

Lloyd Douglas, in revealing his motive for the writng of *The Robe,* said that it had always troubled him hat between the words of the Creed which describe the birth and death of Jesus only a comma appears. He vanted to write a book showing the effect of Jesus ipon the lives of men. History has done that. Men iave always felt, as they confronted Christ, as though ll intervening centuries and years had been wiped out nd the soul stood in the presence of the One Living. 'The cross is a master key," said an old professor, 'which fits every lock of human experience. Whatever your belief or lack of belief, the cross always has something to say to you."

Decisions made in Jesus' day must be made by us. Once again it is for us to choose between Barabbas and Christ. Again we must decide to take either the course of Peter or of John. However, a wise choice for us should be more easily made since we see this Christ, as John R. Mott has said, "alone, standing erect, among the fallen of the earth." We know that civilizations and empires which fought him have crumbled. We have had revealed for us some of the meaning of Jesus' words, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

THE CROSS FACED WILLINGLY

"The idea of God on a cross," said Nietzsche, "reversed all the values of antiquity." The Jew revolted from a Messiah on a cross. Such a Messiah was a stumbling block. The Greek greeted the idea with derision. Yet Jesus voluntarily chose the cross. He set his face to go to Jerusalem. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus understood what faced him. The cross was, on the part of Jesus, a show of power. H. H. Farmer has claimed that Jesus was not nailed to the cross by others but that he himself did the nailing. Jesus' refusal of a drug was indication that he meant to keep this all in his own hands. In medieval times the crucifix with its limp, pain-drenched, pathetic figure gave a wrong trend to thinking on the cross. Of Christianity Studdert-Kennedy said: "It is not the Gospel of the bowed head, but the Gospel of the set teeth." Christ knew what he was doing. The words, "It is finished," do not sound as if they issue from a man caught in hopeless circumstances quite beyond his control. "If you pity Christ," someone warns, "you are not seeing him." Proceeding on the basis that Jesus here was conscious of what he was doing and chose his course, the cross would appear the answer to all the baffling riddles of life.

The world over, men come of their own volition to the cross. "Today more than ever," said George Bernard Shaw, "whenever things grow dark and God's ways seem difficult to understand, when our own minds are puzzled and confused, people gather at Calvary, stand and look." Indeed, the whole outlook of our modern world might be darkened were it not that there was once a Calvary.

THE CROSS AS A REVEALER

We are attracted to the cross, for it is our revealer. It has been said that more than one distinguished physician, standing before a portrait by the famous painter, Sargent, noticed for the first time signs of disease in the face of his patient—symptoms that had eluded him in the living face, evidence of some disease that had baffled diagnosis. Upon examination the disease revealed by Sargent's portrait was verified. The cross of Christ has such an effect upon our lives, revealing those things which have begun to bring death to the soul. The man who has honestly seen himself in the light of the cross becomes disturbed over what he has seen. Here our modern world stands deeply in need. It does not recognize nor detect diseases which if unchecked will destroy its soul. There are times when the cross brings order out of chaos in our own lives and thinking. Speaking at an open-air meeting in Glasgow, Scotland, Donald Fraser held up the cross on his watch chain and said: "Whenever I am much depressed and my work is too much for me and my sky is dark, my hand has formed the habit of straying to this symbol and it brings to me this message: 'The cross is empty,' and on the crest of that wave courage comes back to me."

At the same time the cross of Christ carries with it the hope of our world. Just now, when victory appears to be drawing near, such a host of troubling questions arise as to make brave men tremble. A policeman localized this matter as he sat in a minister's study telling what dangers the race question holds. How can the racial problem be solved? Westbrook Pegler suggests that the answer is to be found atop the church steeple in the cross. It will take more than a brain-trust to settle our race problem. We will need to turn to the Prince of Peace if we are to bring the world together in a spirit of brotherhood. Such an undertaking will involve our catching the spirit and understanding the meaning of the cross.

In the City Temple, in London, Leslie Weatherhead celebrated the British victory in Egypt by singing one of Martin Luther's hymns set to a German tune to tell the world that the fellowship to be found in Christ knows no national boundaries.

Our world going the direction that it is, and with its

momentum, cannot help blowing up. Christ can bring a new spirit to the world. His spirit can spare us dissolution.

DEMONSTRATING THE CROSS

During the First World War a Scottish soldier was brought into a hospital, tenaciously clinging to a German helmet. "Did you kill him?" asked the nurse. "No," he replied, "he was my friend." Then the Scottish soldier told how he had lain on the battlefield, wounded and unable to help himself. A few yards away was a German lad also wounded and unable to help himself. Slowly they crawled toward each other. Each then stanched the other's wounds and thereby each saved the other's life. The Scottish boy gave the German his cap. The German lad gave the Scottish boy his helmet. There is something reminiscent in this story of the spirit of Christ on the cross. We will simply have to accept every man as our brother or suffer the consequences.

It is not enough to teach the brotherhood of man. We shall have to demonstrate it. Jesus is able to give us the power. The cross speaks God's love and forgiveness, without which our world is lost. We have been told of the German lad who came home and tried to express to his father his feeling about nazism as compared to the Christian faith. "Adolf Hitler," he said, "has become so big, and Jesus Christ has become so small." A hundred years ago Carlyle, thinking of Christ, said: "Poor man, your day is done." Not yet! It begins to appear to many of us that Christ is about all the world has of real worth, the one spark of sanity. If history were given a headline it should be "Christ is Crucified." Archbishop Soderblom, that Swedish saint, wrote: "The horrible spectacle of one crucified as a criminal is the central point in the highest religious worship of the human race."

One of the dictators has said that he would set up his regime by four-fifths of the world in blood. The real clash in our world is between the dictator type and men who choose the way of the cross.

To a swaggering, strutting dictator Jesus and his cross are no less irrelevant than they were to Pilate. We do well to recall that Jesus always spoke as though the future belonged to him. Napoleon sensed on St. Helena the eternal nature of the reign of Christ.

TODAY CALVARY IS VIEWED ANEW

Just now with so much anxiety and sorrow our people look with new intensity to the cross. On battlefields our men command a new view of Calvary. There, often enough, come words the meaning of which the crucifixion and resurrection have validated. We are attracted afresh to something we feel grateful is there.

A Scottish minister, J. G. Jeffry, tells of going to the home of a friend. After a conversation of rich spiritual significance they were preparing to separate when as if in answer to an unspoken need the host rose, separated two paneled doors in the wall over the fireplace and thereby disclosed a picture of Christ on the cross. After a few moments of silence the doors were closed and the host said quietly: "I could not live with that always before me, but I know it's there." Yes, it is good for us to know Christ has done something for us once for all on the cross.

A saintly little old woman was injured in a collision on her way to a New Year's Eve communion service. I suggested to her that it was difficult to understand why she lay there suffering. Pointing to her near-by dresser, where rested a picture of Christ praying in Gethsemane, she said with unruffled tone: "He suffered, too." So Jesus helps us. But more than that. Our attitude toward him is of great moment.

THE SOLUTION OF LIFE'S RIDDLES

In a masterful way the late T. R. Glover pointed up the essential facts concerning Jesus and his cross. He said: "Picture the carpenter shop. A customer drops in and orders a plow to be made or a yoke, and a carpenter agrees to make it. Next day you can see him busy with it bending over his bench, wiping the sweat from his face. You see him sitting by the roadside with a crowd of his friends as they hand him bread and he passes them the salt. You see him drop off to sleep in a boat with sheer fatigue; and at last you see him hanged on a cross. And then within one generation they say the world is going to be judged by that crucified carpenter. It is incredible; and yet mankind at its soberest and quietest has age by age said that it cannot think of anybody else."

In our sanest moments we conclude that Christ and his cross come closer to solving the riddles or riddle of life than all else. If there had been no Christ and no Calvary there would be darkness indeed. But, as it is, we see the One who hung there as the One who has "the words of eternal life."

Upon a Hill

THREE MEN shared death upon a hill,
But only one man died;
The other two—
A thief and God Himself—
Made rendezvous.

Three crosses still
Are borne up Calvary's hill,
Where Sin still lifts them high:
Upon the one, sag broken men
Who, cursing, die;
Another holds the praying thief,
Or those who, penitent as he,
Still find the Christ
Beside them on the tree.

MIRIAM LEFEVRE CROUSE.

Good Friday

WE carve his Cross into an amulet,
The red blood which he shed upon the hil
We make a rite of worship, and forget
The red religion of courageous will.

HUGH O. ISBELL.

The Divine Purpose

By Paul Scherer

ON THAT last night before the crucifixion Jesus looked around the little circle of his friends and aid, "None of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?" I have always thought there was something wistful about that. Instead of being so thoroughly wrapped up in their own grief at his going, he wanted them perhaps to be a little more inquisitive than they were about the whole far purpose of God. Again and again he had tried to startle them out of their narrow world, where the only thing that seemed to matter was the thing that was happening to them. And again and again they had fallen back with a distinct thud, like somebody stuck in a bog. Peter had question to put; but just look at it! "We have forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have therefor?" That's what concerned him: would they get anything?

When Jesus was talking to his friends on another occasion about the end of all things, "distress of nations with perplexity, men's hearts failing them for fear," all they wanted to know was, When is it going to happen? Nothing about God; just a bit of inside information, a quiet tip on the finish of the universe, so that they could get ready! That's how it was with them. I dare say there was many an attempt to take off. I suppose they tried more than once to shake free of the earth, wings spread, motors roaring; but the load of self was somehow too heavy, and they couldn't leave the ground! Here it was their own dark future that was like thick mud on the runway. The mind of God—they hadn't even asked about that!

TODAY'S SEARCH FOR A GOAL

Well, there was a time when we didn't either. When we didn't worry our heads much about any ideas that didn't happen to be our own. Now I think it's different. Most of us have stopped to look around. Seldom in history, writes Professor Tillich, have men been so disturbed about history. If there is any purpose at all in this that's going on, we want to know what it is, he says. What end is there in view? What's the goal we're making for, consciously or unconsciously? Is there any pattern anywhere? Any "profound word," any "wisdom," any "prophecy"? Where can we find anything to solemnize this business and make sense out of it?

Well, I know this: Nature doesn't have a great deal to say about it; that's certain. She has labored hard—been at great pains—to produce us. We're men. She seems to have been aiming at that. But why? She doesn't set us any task, as someone has put it, or tell us where to go. Life looks like a pearl of great price now and then, if you hold it in the sun; feels like it sometimes; but what to do with it? We seem to be mountaineers by birth, we like to climb; but we have to choose our own peak and write our own directions. I am not surprised that with nothing but the universe to judge by, when you ask our philosophers what the meaning of it is they just say they don't know!

It is hard to find out from the past too. There has no doubt been a kind of progress through the ages toward what the best conscience of humanity defines as good: a sort of rough justice, an accepted if somewhat approximate decency, some sense of the value of persons. We can at least get a glimpse now and then of how things ought to move. But there seems to be nothing very noticeable in the process itself by which the movement is guaranteed. There is very little that is automatic about it, so that all we have to do is to muddle through. When we just muddle, it is into a worse muddle than we were in before. Evolution doesn't seem to take care of it. Never was it clearer, for instance, than it is now that we've got to do something about international relationships; we've got to do something about the race problem, take a few steps in the right direction anyhow; and never before have racial pride and national egotism reached such heights. History points a finger, suggests another, but keeps wading deeper and deeper into the mire. Always there is the likelihood of disaster, in the midst of prosperity; and always there is the chance to escape in the midst of destruction. With the permanent possibility of progress, and the permanent possibility of deterioration: so that neither the optimist nor the pessimist can prove his case.

CREEDS—AND THE MIND OF CHRIST

But what distresses me most of all is that you get the same ambiguous testimony from the church herself. She used to talk of God's mercy while she burned thirty thousand witches. She has been known to sell men and women for cold cash. The record isn't pretty. Sometimes I wonder how much better it is now. I have seen religion used to bless the status quo—so have you: as if Christianity were nothing but the tail of some political or economic kite; throwing a cloak of respectability over vested interests, while we shiver with a childish fear at "word-spooks" like communism; running along complacently with Oriental Exclusion Acts, and high tariffs, and military necessities, restrictive quarters, preferential trade agreements—all the paraphernalia of World War III. Until nobody pays much attention any more; certainly not the men who shape things that shape our lives! While we go on muttering our creeds, bickering about our differences, and spreading our legs apart to hold out against all change. When you hang up our deeds by the side of our words we haven't too much to be proud of in the witness we have borne to the mind of God.

That mind is in Christ. Let me set it down now. Not in nature or in history; not among generals or politicians; not in the minutes of the meeting held at Moscow, or Cairo, or Teheran, or Dumbarton Oaks, or Quebec; in *Christ*. Nowhere else can you see "why the nature of the past is what it is, or the end toward which the present moves." If you and I won't ask him

what he's about, he will ask us what we're about; and most of us will just stammer, because we don't know! He is always seeking one thing. He isn't bent on making life pleasant for everybody. He isn't bent on preserving certain institutions which have grown dear to you. He isn't bent on bolstering up some system to which you have become accustomed. He isn't bent on establishing the superiority of the white man over the black or the yellow or the brown, of the West over the East. If you think he is headed in any one of these directions, there can be nothing between you and him but misunderstanding, confusion thrice confounded. No purpose on this earth that you have will ever take precedence over the passion he has.

WHAT HISTORY IS ABOUT

He is intent on getting rid of the evil. That's what history is about. He is intent on shaping human life into a Kingdom where there shall be "men of good will, of God's will." The cost doesn't stagger him. He thinks it's worthwhile, whatever the cost. There's no free-wheeling anywhere, along four-lane highways. The road is every bit as rough as the road to Calvary. An appalling earnestness is traveling down it. Make no mistake about that. Not even the cross matters. And make no mistake about this: that until you and I begin to travel with him we will never find the peace we are looking for. Why do some of us keep casting about so miserably in the welter of our own unhappiness, as if the purposes of God were hidden? They aren't. We just won't take off. Almost impossible to get anybody to do that! The direction is as clear as a pike-staff when you get inside the covers of the New Testament; as clear as the stained-glass windows when you get inside the church.

These conferences, of churchmen for example, that have been held during the past few years at Oxford and Malvern, at Delaware and Princeton; they all converged and agreed on half-a-dozen underlying principles that ought to provide us with a little guidance for the years to come. No miracle will happen because we have put those principles into words. We have yet to make them relevant to specific historical situations. But I want you to notice how they move inevitably along the lines of the Christian gospel: the moral law that's basic to world order; the rights of the individual, of all minorities, of the weak and the oppressed; social justice; economic cooperation, international institutions for the maintenance of peace. They are after the pattern of the mind of Christ.

That mind is always clear enough for us to act on it—even in the vast complexities of the modern world. We've got where we are by some very simple vices. We will get out by the practice of simpler virtues than you think. One afternoon I sat down with two friends, to go over the trouble that had been brewing in their family for years; somebody was moving in and out with a genius for making it. You know how it is. Somebody who hasn't enough to do, so he goes about stirring things up for the rest of us! You want to be a Christian, and try; but he just keeps on—until you start wondering if there isn't some other way out of the ugly situation. So we talked a while; and at last they left. One of them said as he went out, "I'm a little disappointed. I thought maybe you'd say something I didn't know!" The other smiled and looked up at a painting of Jesus. "I knew there wasn't any other way. I knew it when I came." We have the information we need. He wants us to share in that painful work of him with "every gift and power of our being."

THIS WAR—AND THE GOSPEL

Take this war and hold it up before him. Then don't expect too much to come of it. Take the kind of chicanery that masquerades sometimes as diplomacy, and hold it up there. It will blister your hands. Van Paasen writes about it in his book on Palestine. He says that the new and better world, with quotation marks, is becoming visible there; and it's not a very happy or inspiring sight! Police the world, we say now; and I'm all for it, if we can set up any law among the nations: but that isn't the answer; not until the other fellow's freedom matters to us every bit as much as our own, and matters first—his inalienable rights to life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness. You couldn't batter us into submission on any other terms, and we are proud of it! Hold it all up before him, and see how it looks—the whole nasty mess we've helped to make of the world and may help to make again. We'll blame it on somebody else. We'll argue about it, and excuse ourselves a hundred ways for doing what we do. The only thing we won't do is to go at it from God's end. "This is my commandment, that you love one another, even as I have loved you." The "even as" is important. You recall, don't you, that he was crucified? Do you expect to get through scot-free?

I mentioned at the very beginning an article by Professor Tillich. He was writing about the God of History, and how that unknown prophet of the Exile whom we call Second Isaiah kept talking of the suffering servant of Jehovah. We do not know today who those suffering servants are, he goes on, as we do not know exactly who it was that prompted the vision of the prophet. But we do know that they exist. We do not know what they will make of the future. But we do know that their suffering will not be in vain. They are the hidden tools of history: the aged and the infant, the women and the young men, all the expendable, those who are innocently sacrificed. The rules of empire, the men who actually carry through God's purposes for them, are as ignorant of his counsel as Cyrus was. They don't know the consequences of their policies. If we look to them we also will remain ignorant. If we look to the true servants of God and to the true God whom they serve, we will know!

STRIKING HANDS WITH GOD

It is ours here then, day after day, to strike hands with what that God wants, solemnly and joyously. That's where our prayers have to take us; and our suffering too, if we are called on to suffer. Jesus didn't resent it when he was. He didn't just accept it either. He marched through it to make it redeem what it could! He didn't question God's justice: you can

vaste your time that way if you like. He took up God's challenge, and turned his own tragedy into the ledge of our triumph. We can do that too—with overty and with loneliness, with failure and disease: vhatever it is that sets in against me. If only I can et hold of it and harness it and put the bit in its teeth nd make it serve something that I know quite well is n the heart of God!

"None of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?" Instead of jumping in with our own plans and laying bout us. He may be working at some idea of his! I ead once of a child, malformed at birth; and of how, vhen she was born, the choice of life and death lay for moment in the physician's hands. All he had to do was o do nothing; and she would have died. But he did vhat he could, and she lived. Afterwards he blamed himself bitterly for bringing her into the world a hopeless cripple. It haunted him every time he went into he clinic and found her there. Then for years more he ost sight of her; until one night he saw her again, hough he didn't recognize her. She was still a cripple; but nobody gave it a thought. She was playing a harp n some Christmas concert at his hospital, and doing it beautifully. When the last song was sung, he went over to find out who she was. It was her mother who old him. Impulsively he went up and put his arms around the daughter and drew her to him. My dear, he said, when he could speak, you'll never know what his hour has meant to me. Go back to your harp and play that again: "Silent Night, Holy Night!" I want o listen to it alone. There's a load on my shoulders no one has ever seen; and only you can lift it!

'HOW UNSEARCHABLE HIS JUDGMENTS!'

So they sat down in the big room by themselves, after all the others were gone. And not a word was spoken. Just the harp, with its soft, deep notes. "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." So did Paul bow his head when he couldn't make it out. But his lips kept moving to the music in his heart. "How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!"

This God we have is a God who is always making for dreams, if only we don't insist on spoiling it! He landed once on these enemy-occupied shores, landed in disguise; so does C. S. Lewis sum up the case for Christianity. And he'll land again—in force. But that will be the end. You can't choose then whose side you are on. It will be too late. That will be the time when we shall discover whose side we were on. Now is our chance to choose. He is holding back, to give us that chance. It won't last forever. We have to take it or leave it!

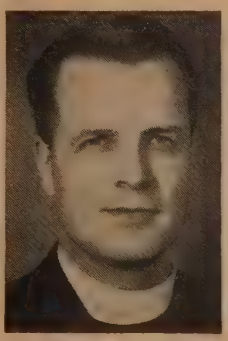
One of the most precious elements of American life is religious freedom. In the exercise of that freedom we in the United States have lived happily and have flourished for more than 150 years. This nation has been built by men of all faiths working side by side and in harmony. If we are to keep this nation intact, we must preserve that principle.

Wendell Willkie.

The Cross

By Evert E. Ellis

GOD comes into your life by way of the cross. Perhaps we should say the same thing in a different way. The cross is not your way to God. You cannot climb on a cross and get God.



Now God is more concerned about this than you are. Do you believe that? Well, look straight down into your heart and ask yourself just how much you are concerned. How much of your life is truly devoted to the one all-consuming passion and purpose of loving and serving God? But consider this: God spends all of his life—and all of eternity too—in a constant concern for you. And at this serious Lenten season consider this too: the symbol of the cross of Christ represents how far God's concern for you goes.

I

The cross of Christ is not a tree, but a tumult. The wood which was the cross is not important except to the superstitious. It is true that there is a legend called the Invention of the Cross, which is but a version of an older legend. The legend which concerns Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, says that in 325 A. D., she had the traditional place of the grave of Jesus excavated. After a crucifixion all of the trappings were put in a big hole and covered up. Three crosses were found and the cross of Jesus was discovered by someone, who touching the true cross was miraculously healed. The main part of the cross was put in a church which Helena erected on the spot. The balance went into a statue of Constantine and into a new church at Rome and into souvenirs. Small fragments of the supposedly true cross were sold. It would seem that souvenir hunters, autograph seekers and goal-post splinter gatherers are not exactly new phenomena.

Well, wood is wood. The tree represented the tumult, not only of the crowd crying "Crucify him! Crucify him! He is guilty! He is guilty!" but of individuals who in outward calm but inward turmoil stood on the street corners, sat in church pews, or looked on from reserved balcony seats.

"Whom say ye that I am?" says Jesus. "If you will follow me, deny yourself, take up your cross daily and follow me." In Luke we have the word "daily." There is no comma after cross. The cross is a continuous affair.

But if you take up a cross daily it will not be a tree—it will be the pain, the drudgery, the heartache, the loneliness, the toil, the misunderstanding—all those things which cause the tumult within; and if you listen you'll hear God, you'll feel God—but what is most important, you'll know God.

God doesn't look so beautiful in sorrow, sickness and sin—not at first—but then you see the cross of Christ. You see it as you've never seen it before. You hear him as you've never heard him before. "If any man would follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross every day and follow me."

II

The cross is not a word but the Flesh—the Word become Flesh.

It is interesting to note that the word "cross" is not in the Old Testament, though the writers were probably aware of it. As an instrument of death the cross was detested by the Jews. "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." The Romans didn't like the word either. Cicero says: "Let the very name of the cross be far away not only from the body of a Roman citizen, but even from his thoughts, his eyes, his ears."

Translated into contemporary thinking, seeing and hearing, one finds an echo in the words of today. We use the word in sermon, symbol and song.

Beautiful and wonderful thoughts are written about the cross and our duty to obey the way of the cross. We set crosses upon our spires and steeples, and over our cities. We sing the cross to death in deadly dirges. Well, what of it? Isn't it doing some good? Aren't we getting fox-hole religion out of it?

Listen to the chaplain who was out in the South Pacific nearly two years. "All this newspaper and radio talk about fox-hole religion is the bunk! After the men get back to safety and I ask them about their prayers, they laugh, saying that 'it was different up there in the islands.' They prayed, 'Lord, save my skin.'"

"Many of the men are selfish beasts. Why, out in the islands there is a real question as to who started the atrocities. Some of our men dug up the bodies of Japs buried four days, took the butts of their rifles and knocked their teeth out to get the gold from their mouths. I saw that with my own eyes."

"Wait a minute, chaplain, would you say that in a pulpit?" "The authorities wouldn't let me," he shot back. "What if I said it?" "Nobody would believe you."

"Do you mean to say that there is nothing that can be done, chaplain?"

"No, not that. I am saying that there is only one message—and that is in the Book. The chaplains who have only an ethical message do not get nor keep a hearing. Men are not interested in being told they must do their duty. They are not interested in words. They want God!"

We too want God. Not just a word, but the Word become Flesh which speaks to our sick, sorrowful and sinful souls: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross day by day, and follow me."

III

The cross of Christ is not a tragedy, but a triumph. So too your cross. It need not be a tragedy for you. Whatever your problem happens to be, consider it carefully—let it be God breaking through the barrier into your life.

Do you think your cross is painful and agonizing? Then listen to this! We are told that "among the Romans, crucifix was preceded by scourging, undoubtedly to hasten impending death. The victim then bore his own cross, or at least the upright beam, to the place of execution. When he was tied to the cross nothing further was done and he was left to die from starvation. If he was nailed to the cross, at least in Judea, a stupefying drink was given him to deaden the agony.

"The suffering of death by crucifixion was intense, especially in hot climates. Severe local inflammation coupled with bleeding of the jagged wounds, produced traumatic fever, which was aggravated by the exposure to the heat of the sun, the strained position of the body and insufferable thirst. The wounds swelled about the rough nails, and the torn and lacerated tendons and nerves caused excruciating agony. The arteries of the head and stomach were surcharged with blood and a terrific headache ensued. The victim of crucifixion literally died a thousand deaths. Tetanus not rarely intervened and the rigors of the attending convulsions would tear at the wounds to add to the burden of pain."

In the face and fact of such an awful and impending future, Christ said to his disciples, "Take up your cross daily and follow me."

So take up your cross, whatever it is, and God will transform your tragedy into triumph.

IV

Sometimes I wish we Protestants used the sign of the cross in our daily devotions. Then at least we would be exposed to the fact of the cross. The cross is where God meets us. The type of cross Jesus is supposed to have died upon is called the "dagger cross." Stab us awake, God! Give us any cross by which we can find thee—find thee now—and find thee day by day.

We have known too much of what Stanley Hoppe in *The Crisis of Faith* calls "that lethargy of death which creeps over all souls that deny God's power." The cross "is, for us, either the stone which shall become the head of the corner or the rock that shall grind us all to powder. Therefore the cross is crucial. Through it we enter into life. By it we are transformed into the likeness of Christ. By way of the cross we pass through our little Gethsemanes of tragedy and dereliction."

By way of the cross, God still comes into life. By way of the cross, God still comes into the world.

That is not your cross in the chancel, nor yet is it the one on Golgotha. The cross which you take on you today is meaningful because of the cross that "towers o'er the wrecks of time"—Christ himself!

DEEP in the souls of men is a force that reaches back into a thousand generations. It is the ceaseless yearning to be free. Its advance is as sure as the movement of the stars, as real as the law of gravitation, as everlasting as the existence of God.

HERBERT HOOVER.

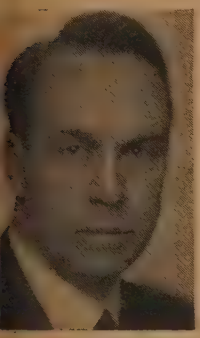
'In Your Stead'

A Communion Meditation

By George A. Buttrick

This is my body, which is broken for you. 1 Corinthians 11:24.

"BODY broken": that word is no stranger in our world. How many bodies are being broken! We cannot forget them. On a quiet beach we suddenly remember the strife on the other side of the ocean. In this still church we think of St. Peter's in Rome, and of cities filled with the drone of planes and the thunder of bombs. We ought to remember: the Sacrament should not be a poor escape from reality. But there are different ways of remembering; and the one Body broken makes it possible for us to live through this era of amazing destruction and sober disillusionment in undaunted hope and unswerving resolve.



I

For His "body broken" is not like ours; or, rather, is both like and unlike. In one sense a man can ie for his neighbor: "Greater love hath no man than iis—". A mother's sacrifice can shield her children om a hundred ills. But in another area of life we nnot heal one another by any sacrifice, because *there* e are all in the same condemnation. That is why ien in the army find solace in the Sacrament. They and ready in sincere conscience to offer their broken odies for folk back home, but they know that they id all men have need of a purer sacrifice. They can ave off outward evil, but the inner threat they cannot ay.

This the soldier knows. This any wise man knows. 'his Jesus knew. He addressed the disciples not only s their friend, but as their Lord; and he addressed iem as representatives of our whole humanity. "This my body broken in your stead." He wrought a work or them which as men they could never accomplish or themselves.

II

What is this region in which we cannot greatly elp one another? In the Shakespeare play Portia abbed herself for love of Brutus, but she could not ereby cleanse his memory. Even if she had flung erself between them and his foes instead of dying y her own hand, his memory would still have been ained. She could not restore his jaded will-to-goodess, nor could any human act. When the will is eak how can we strengthen it? Not by a will already eak. As well might we hope to make a sick body well y exercising it when it is diseased. The dark center f human helplessness is precisely that region of our ins. We sin against the creation—in our life and in all life. Then only the Creator can really forgive us and renew our life.

Dr. C. E. M. Joad, professor of philosophy, has been for many years a leading and honest agnostic. He did not deny God. But reasons against faith in a good God seemed to him at least as strong as those in support of faith, so he would say only that he did not know. Now he has suddenly reversed himself. Why? Because of the downright wickedness of the world. He had followed the psychologists who argued that wickedness is only mental and emotional maladjustment, and the sociologists who similarly argued that wickedness is only social maladjustment. He believed that if man were psychically harmonized in a decent environment he would become automatically good. Then the sheer cruelty of our world broke upon him. He knew that a nazi torturing a Jew was not in every instance repressed in childhood, nor in every instance thwarted by circumstances. These maladjustments are factors, but not roots. Dr. Joad reached the conclusion which, he admits, religion long ago reached, that evil is "endemic in the heart of man." Endemic means *native,* permanently and almost constitutionally present. But why should this conviction turn him to God? Let him say why:

"For the simple truth is that one cannot help oneself. To be confronted by a universe which contains evil as an ineradicable fact, to know there is no defense against it save in the strength or rather in the weakness of one's own character . . . this I find to be a position almost intolerably distressing. For one cannot help but know that one's own character is not strong enough. . . . Our burden in the world, as it has become, is indeed greater than we can bear. . . ."

So he reached the conclusion that a man must quench all desire and die—or else fling himself on the faith of God made known in Christ. If you wish to read about his pilgrimage and are willing to do some hard thinking, I would suggest that you turn to his recent book entitled *God and Evil,* from which the above is quoted.

III

Of course faith in Christ is always better than what the world calls "mere faith." For Christ himself is not spun out of our consciousness: He is fact. He is there—in strange power to forgive sins, in wonderful at-homeness in every human land, in persistent abidingness in every generation. It is not mere faith that in him God came to earth, suffered as God must suffer in our kind of world, and made common cause with mankind in joy and sorrow. Not mere faith, for Christ is fact—and Godlike fact. But it calls for faith—as any kind of living calls for faith. Such faith sees in Christ the willingness of God to share our life and bear our sins: "This is my body broken in your stead."

Cleopatra left a jewel in the cup. That was all she could do, being only Cleopatra; and a jewel is not much use against a seared conscience and a world gone awry. Christ left hope in the cup—the hope of

sins forgiven and life renewed. "Take, eat. This do." That is all we can do—receive it, and believe.

IV

But if our life hereafter is a denial of the very spirit of the Sacrament, we turn the Sacrament into mockery—in milder copying of Italian brigands who are faithful at the Mass but do not hesitate to slit the traveler's throat. Here we gain new power. But this strength is like any other in this: that we keep it only as we use it after its own nature. Besides, how else can our world learn of Christ unless we try to live in his spirit, depending on his presence?

Hear him say now as you kneel: "This is my body broken in your stead. Take, eat." Hear him say as you leave this church, as you go on the morrow to a new day's task: "This also do in remembrance of me."

The Peace of God

By Kenneth Brookes

My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you. John 14:27.

THIS promise of peace comes to us as the promise of water to a people in a dry and thirsty land; nay, even as a mirage upon an arid desert. It is too good to be true! We have lived amid violence and warfare so long, and people have cried "Peace, Peace" so often when there was no peace, that the worldly-wise among us turn away whenever they hear the word, for fear that they will once again be deceived. The rest of us, simple enough to hope, turn our eyes toward the east each morning, searching for some sign of the dawn, and each evening bend our knees to pray that the morrow may bring an end to the night of warfare. But all of us, wise and foolish alike, must live through these days of violence and strife, and because we must we need a haven of peace within ourselves. We all face the danger of allowing the turmoil and strife of our world to infiltrate through the lines of our soul's defenses and disrupt the life of the spirit. We need a refuge, a high tower, a haven of peace within ourselves.

Such a haven Jesus promised us when he said, "My peace I give unto you." Remembering the tumultuous life that Jesus lived nineteen hundred years ago in ancient Palestine, it is difficult to understand that phrase, "my peace." What peace did Jesus have in his possession? Did this "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" have any peace to give? What was "my peace"?

When our Lord used those words, "my peace," he certainly was not referring to the absence of physical hardships and suffering. He who had "nowhere to lay his head," who "was despised and rejected of men," who was driven from the town of his boyhood, wh was scourged and crucified, never knew the peace physical comfort.

Nor did "my peace" mean freedom from a heav heart. It was not a peace of withdrawal from th evils of this world. This man, living as he did in th very midst of violence, did not close his eyes to th dirt and filth and misery of life, even though every sig touched his bleeding heart. Sensitive as he was to th social injustices about him, eager as he was to rid th world of ignorance and sin, Jesus could not but have heavy heart, could not but weep over the religiou moral and social conditions about him. "My peace" w not a peace of careless irresponsibility.

THE 'PEACE' OF JESUS

The peace which the Master promised to give w not derived from self-satisfaction, either for what had done or for what he had become. In view of th fact that no person has accomplished so much in th realm of the spirit as Jesus of Nazareth, it is surprisin that he did not take comfort in self-admiration. H was, on the other hand, always ambitious to do mor always restless until he had gone a bit farther. Sel satisfaction for his accomplishments was not a part the peace which Jesus had. Nor was he satisfied wi his own goodness. This may sound strange concernin the man whom we look upon as the perfect exampl the man of whom his greatest critic, Renan, crie "Whatever the surprises of history, Jesus will never surpassed." But Jesus never prided himself upon h righteousness, never found peace in his own goodne You will remember the occasion when a young ma came to him and asked: "Good Master, what goo thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" Jes did not answer the question until he had administere a rebuke: "Why calledst thou me good? There none good but one, that is God." Certainly if anyo could have the peace which comes from knowing he h led the good life, Jesus could have had it. But he h it not.

The peace, then, which our Lord possessed was n derived from physical comfort, did not proceed fro an ascetic withdrawal from the uncomfortable rea ties of life, and was not the result of self-adulation.

GOD'S PRESENCE THE KEY

"My peace" was the peace of God. It was t peace which comes from living with God. It was t peace that arises out of the knowledge that God present.

In our day we have made truth so complicated th we have failed to recognize it when it is simple. T simple truth is that man's life is incomplete witho God. Man needs God to counterbalance the inad quacies, the weaknesses and the sinfulness of his ov life.

It was this consciousness of God's presence that ga balance, and power, and peace to the life of the m of Nazareth.

Jesus was utterly devoted to the cause of righteou ness, but this passionate devotion alone would ha

recked his spiritual life. His heart would have been tirely broken by the inability or unwillingness of ople and society to reform. His passion needed the tience that comes of the knowledge that God too is orking his righteousness in the earth. His fervor eded the faith that the Kingdom of God will come in od's good time, that it will grow just as the great ustard plant grows from the tiny seed. Without this nsciousness of God his ambition would have cracked elf against the apparent inevitability of wrongdoing. is ambition needed the assurance of God's presence this world.

THE HUMILITY OF THE SAINTS

Faced with the same kind of world today, we need th the passion of Christ and the patience. We need e fervor and the faith, the ambition and the assur- ce. We need the eagerness to slave for the right and e knowledge that whatever work we do is never lost. ne without the other will never give us peace. We ed the presence of God. With the knowledge of his esence our hearts may bleed for a sorrowing and sin- l world, but they will never break.

Again, Jesus was conscious that he was not yet good." He recognized that he had not fulfilled all e possibilities of his life. What else could that question, "Why calledst thou me good?" mean? It is a strange fact that the greatest spiritual leaders have felt more keenly than others this sense of their own shortcomings. The apostle Paul, who did more for the extension of Christianity than any other, cried out in despair: "What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." St. Augustine, another great and good Christian, felt the sting of conscience when he wrote: "For I was afraid, O God, thou wouldst hear me too soon and heal me at once, of my disease of lust which I wished to satiate rather than to see extinguished." Yet this sting of conscience, this conviction of sin, alone would have meant the extinction of their spiritual lives. Jesus could not have lived with that question, "Why calledst thou me good?" unless there was also the consciousness of a Father's presence. St. Paul and St. Augustine could not have lived with their tremendous sense of guilt, alone. They needed the knowledge that "with God there is much forgiveness." "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."

How much more do we need this knowledge of God's forgiving love! That knowledge must be a part of our life's experience, a central theme of our daily living. Mere intellectual assent to the statement that God is a forgiving Father is not enough; nay, may

The Ten Thousand Dollar Bonfire

A Sermon for Youth by Clarence F. Avey

NOT many years ago there lived in the state of California a very wonderful man. He was nown as a "wizard" because he could do so many onderful things with plants. He could cause such surising changes in them that what was once useless beme valuable for human beings either because of its od or its beauty. Perhaps you have already guessed is name—Luther Burbank.

Now, Mr. Burbank used to have every little while hat his neighbors called a $10,000 bonfire. To be re, he did not take ten or twenty or hundred dollar lls and set them on fire. But he did something that as the equivalent of it. Into such a bonfire there ight go 499 cherry plants out of the 500 that he had rown; or there might be 99,999 rosebushes which ad been brought to blooming in order to find the undred-thousandth which was not burned; or again, 500 gladiolus bulbs, with a market value of a half ollar apiece might be put in the fire after the one, r two, or dozen best among them had been selected. ll of these could have been sold to make money, if Ir. Burbank had chosen. Instead he put them in his mous bonfire!

What was the secret of this strange proceeding? et us listen to the plant wizard as he tells us in his wn words. "It is better to run the risk," he said, of losing a perfected product, through the destruction f the elements that went into it, than to issue forth o the world a lot of second bests which have within them the power of self-perpetuation and multiplication, and which, if we do not destroy them now, will clutter the earth with inferiority or mediocrity."

Now we know the secret of Mr. Burbank's expensive bonfire, and the secret of his life as well. We can put the motto of his life into four small but important words, *"Nothing but the best."* Rather than give something less perfect than the best he could produce, he would destroy the imperfect product.

We are often greatly tempted to give less than our best. How easy it is to say, "That's good enough"! We stop before we have made our project, whatever it may be, the very best of which we are capable. There is a lazy imp in every one of us which seems to strive to keep us from achieving our best. Whenever in the future we may feel the desire to skimp our task, or to give to the world a second-rate product of our labor or skill, let us remember Luther Burbank's $10,000 bonfire, and resolve that the motto of our lives shall be, "Nothing but the best!"

Whenever I think of "nothing but the best," I also think of a Boy who worked beside his father in his carpenter shop, in the long ago. When he helped his father shape a yoke for the oxen we can believe that "the yokes he made were true," that nothing cheap or shoddy came from that shop. For, later on, when he was a grown man, and the time came for him to make a great choice, he gave his best, his life—for you and me.

indeed be dangerous to us, giving us a false sense of security. The fact of forgiveness must be sure knowledge, and that can only be ours as we live in the presence of God, or, as the Hebrew prophets so beautifully wrote, "before the face of God."

"My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you." No, the world cannot give or take away this peace. The world of science may one day bring us peace from physical pain. The world of government may one day bring us peace from armed conflicts. We might become blind and deaf to the "sights and sounds unholy" of our world, and find a peace of withdrawal. We might even become blind to our own sinfulness and spiritual poverty and live in a fool's paradise of self-admiration. That has been known to happen. But if we want the peace "which passeth understanding" we must accept it as the gift of Christ as he leads us into the presence of God. We need the actual presence of the Infinite. We need the encouragement of his smile, the rebuke of his frown; we need his graciousness as well as his judgment. We need to know the pity of his heart and the sorrow also. Thus will come the peace that only he can give.

FOR THE handicapped and the normal, every standard raised by the Bible increases courage, and every beatitude with which it girds them, is victory over the utmost evil imaginable. HELEN KELLER.

The Bible and Tomorrow's World

SOME DAY the war will be over. We shall be stan ing on the threshold of a new world. At our feet w be unprecedented chaos. But reconstruction will be the way. Tomorrow's world will be a more litera world. Millions in Russia, India, Africa, China, La America, in the islands of the sea, will be learning read, and eager to roam afar in their new-found fr dom. In tomorrow's world, the Bible will be with the sphere of effective use by tens of millions of peop whose teachers have cured them of their "book blin ness."

Tomorrow's world will present staggering n dangers. Here lies the challenge to the Christi church. In its hands is a book. On the pages of t book lies good news—the way of salvation for men a nations. Once this book served only little scatter groups in the crumbling empire of Rome. Then spread to all of Europe and the Mediterranean bas bringing hope and more abundant life wherever it w courageously accepted and followed. It remolded t spirit of England, and created in America a new ki of nation. Today the Bible has become potentially t world's one book. It is the hearing of this word th alone will bring salvation to mankind. It is a gr achievement that they might hear. The challenge tomorrow's world is that they must hear.—*Bi Information.*

A Pastoral Prayer

BY DAVID OWENS

O GOD, once known as the Lord of Battles, but now revealed as the Lord of Love, who willest that all men should live in peace and brotherhood, we come to Thee in humble prayer for our state and for the issues of our time.

We confess before Thee our slowness of heart and dullness of mind in the years that are past. Blinded by selfishness, and made devious by our own moral weakness, we helped to dig the pit wherein we are fallen. We condoned evil in others, because there was little health in us. We sought not the right, but the expedient. We hoped by sacrificing others to preserve our own easy way.

O Thou whose forgiveness is perfect because Thy love is infinite, mercifully accept our confession and cleanse our spirit. Quicken in us the sense of right, help us to discern Thy will and to follow it with our whole heart.

Thou who didst on the cross perfect a redemptive work for all mankind, grant that our present suffering may be in its measure redemptive. Teach us, O Lord, the inner meaning of sacrifice, so that our hardship will lead not to exhaustion but rather to renewal of spirit. Vouchsafe that out of it may come a higher order of justice and mercy for all mankind. May the hungry be fed, the sick healed, the aged sustained; may little children grow up in safety and happiness, and you in hope and confidence follow after its bright vis of a fuller life.

We pray for those who stand in the post of dang who hazard their lives on sea, on land and in the a Grant them courage to sustain them, faith to keep th true. To Thy boundless mercy we leave the de and for the wounded and imprisoned we beseech T compassion. In their pain and loneliness come to th in Thine own secret ways to comfort and enfold the Give to those who mourn a wider vision of Thy p pose; enlarge their faith and quicken their hope o new life, wherein all tears shall be washed away a there shall be no more sea. Grant, O Lord, that may be Thine agents in comforting and caring the disabled, the widowed and the fatherless.

Crown Thy mercies, we beseech Thee, by the gift greater wisdom, wider sympathies and more faith following of Thy commands. Touch our spirits w Thine, and direct us into paths of righteousness a peace. Thy Kingdom come, O Lord, in the comm places of our lives. In markets and factories, leg lative halls, churches, schools and homes, may Thy w be done, to the well-being of all men and to glory of Thine adorable name. Through Jesus Ch our Lord. Amen.

Sermon Outlines *from* PULPIT Readers

rgive Us Our Trespasses

ext: Forgive us our trespasses as forgive those who trespass against —Mark 6:12.

. Introduction—Some years ago St. Francis Dam in southern California broke and the water swept vn through the valley, causing a rible loss of life and property. The oner's jury held an investigation an effort to fix the blame for the aster. Among the witnesses called s the chief engineer of the Los geles bureau of water and power. startled everyone with this amaz- utterance: "Don't blame anyone e. Whatever fault there was in job, put it on me." That is a far from our usual conduct in such cumstances. Most of us try to ss the buck" and fix the blame on neone else.

I. Body of Sermon—1. We can very well pray this part of the rd's Prayer unless we admit that have trespasses that need to be given. We all have sinned. It isn't y popular to talk about sin today, sin is a fact, and Jesus reminds that one of our needs is the need a repentant spirit. He does not ch us to pray, "Forgive us *if* we spass. . . ." The hardest people earth to deal with are self- hteous people. How many of us turally think, if we do not say, hank God I am not as other men ." It is easy to develop a per- ted sense of values. When others an untruth we call them liars, when we do the same thing we that we are "clever." But—we sin, and here Jesus reminds us t we need to be saved from our s. If we won't listen to what the le says of all this, let us turn to at modern psychology has to say. contemporary counselor in personal blems says: "A persistent feeling guilt can work havoc in a man. It produce all kinds of functional orders. It can turn him into an alid who has neither strength nor pe. But when a man is forgiven, ceases to be overwhelmed with a se of guilt."

2. Jesus also taught that God is dy to forgive. Many people in sus' day thought of God as a harsh dge eager to condemn. The fact is t Jesus interpreted God as one er to forgive men and to help them ke a new start. Jesus' death on e cross was not a bloody sacrifice appease the wrath of an angry d, as some thought, but a symbol God's willingness to forgive and e. H. H. Farmer of London used call attention to two gilt figures ich dominated the London skyline —the figure of Justice on top of Holborn's criminal court building and the cross on top of the dome of St. Paul's. Said he: "Both are opposed to sin, but they use different methods. Justice looks to the past, the cross toward the future."

3. If sins are to be forgiven, this model prayer teaches us that there are severe conditions that must be met. "Forgive us . . . as we forgive." Some people assume that we are forgiven of our sins by what Jesus did for us, but the Master teaches us that we ourselves must do something about it. When Jesus spoke words of forgiveness to anyone, he demanded from that person some practical demonstration of a transformed life. Easy to talk about God's forgiving love and grace, but forgiving one's neighbor—there's the rub! But—"if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you. . . ."

III. Conclusion—When will the world ever learn this lesson? If we are ever able to have enduring peace, it must be the fruit of a forgiving spirit. Lasting peace, good will and cooperation cannot be established among men or nations that harbor resentments, that thirst for revenge.—*Raymond K. Beals, Howard Methodist Church, Findlay, Ohio.*

Toward Better Speech

A Free Forum for the Discussion Of Slips of Speech or Manner

Ohio: Here are two that get "in my hair": (1) "Will you contact the members?" or "since I contacted him." Contact is a noun, not a verb. *Comment:* It is also a verb, though the usage here protested ("To establish business or social connection with") the dictionaries call slang. (2) "You can be assured of the deepest concern *of we* who are in the ministry . . ." It is surprising how often reputable speakers make this error, seemingly unmindful of the requirement that the object of a verb or preposition shall be in the objective case. *Comment:* So, we sometimes hear, "Between you and I"!

Wisconsin: Emphasize the difference between DEPRECATE and DEPRECIATE. *Comment: **DEP-re-cate*** means "to plead strongly against; express disapproval of, as a plan, purpose or course of action"; while ***de-PRE-shi-ate*** means "to lower the value or rate of; to speak slightingly of; disparage."

Misquotation

It is not unusual to hear familiar verses from the Bible misquoted—not accidentally because such quotations are repeated—because the words have been learned incorrectly. For example, in the Priestly benediction (Num. 6:24-26) "the light of" is often inserted in the last verse to make it, "The Lord lift up THE LIGHT OF his countenance upon you. . . ."

Change Required

One change which is required in this same benediction, however, is the use of "you" instead of "thee" when spoken to a congregation. "Thee" is singular. The books of common worship have usually changed this form to make it read, "The Lord bless you, keep you, etc."

Style the Servant of Truth

"Do not foolishly attach value to carelessness and disorder. Pay sacred heed to the ministry of style. When you have discovered a jewel give it the most appropriate setting. When you have discovered a truth give it the noblest expression you can find. A fine thought can bear, indeed demands, a fine expression. A well-ordered, well-shaped sentence, carrying a body and weight of truth, will strangely influence even the uncultured hearer. We make a fatal mistake if we assume that uncultivated people love the uncouth. I have heard Henry Drummond address a meeting of 'waifs and strays,' a somber little company of ragged, neglected Edinburgh youngsters, and he spake to them with a simplicity and a finished refinement which added the spell of beauty to the vigor of truth. There was no luxuriance, no flowery rhetoric: nothing of that sort: but the style was the servant of the truth, and, whether he was giving warning or encouragement, making them laugh or making them wonder, the sentences were 'gentlemanly,' a combination of beauty and strength."—From *The Preacher: His Life and Work,* by J. H. Jowell (Doran, 1912).

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Some Common Mistakes in Worship

By Clarence Seidenspinner

WORSHIP can be a superb and beautiful experience. When all participants in the service intelligently work together according to the established principles of good worship, a most wonderful opportunity is created for fellowship between man and God. When the leaders of worship are careless in their work, the human ego looms so large that the presence of God is overshadowed. This is tragic beyond all expression, much more tragic than a minister may at first realize. It will be well worth his time to examine the order and conduct of his own service to see whether it contains some of the common mistakes which often thwart a fine fellowship between man and God.

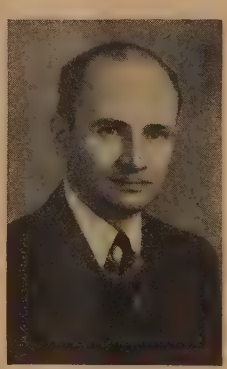
● *Arrangement of Service Important*

Many of these mistakes are related to the arrangement of the service. In spite of all that has been said and written during the last twenty years on the order of the liturgy, some services continue to break down at this point. They lack a fundamental pattern or design and give the impression of having been put together by pulling a number of hymns, prayers and liturgical devices from the hat.

For such a lack of design there is now no good reason. The various writers on worship have suggested several excellent patterns, orders of services now being used by thousands of churches throughout the land. Some of these patterns are sevenfold, fivefold and threefold. They are all expressions of a philosophy of worship which becomes concrete in the order of service. Let a minister choose one of these patterns, study its underlying philosophy carefully, educate his choir, organist and congregation in regard to it, faithfully arrange his weekly service in accordance with it, and he will avoid one of the most common mistakes in worship. Furthermore, he will know that no matter what he may lack in music, building or other help, the order of the service is sound and beautiful.

In this connection, he must also choose between a one- and a two-cycle service. In the two-cycle service the liturgy moves through the various steps of worship to the experience of dedication afforded by the offering. Then a second cycle begins which usually includes a hymn, the sermon, a closing hymn and the benediction. The worshiper is thus called upon to complete two distinct psychological movements. In the one-cycle service the sermon is included as a normal part of the liturgical movement and the service concludes with the offering, presentation, hymn of dedication and the benediction. An increasing number of churches are using the one-cycle service, for it is their experience that greater simplicity, dramatic unity and effectiveness in worship is thus secured.

In the arrangement of the service another common mistake occurs at the point of congregational action. Too often the people are called upon to bob up and down like jacks-in-the-box. No beautiful, flowing movement, no peace and sense of serenity are secured by this continuous rising and sitting of the people. A service can be so arranged as to reduce this movement to three such acts. The congregation can rise for the first hymn and remain standing for whatever acts of adoration may follow. It need not stand again until the hymn before the sermon. Then it may stand for the presentation of the offering and remain standing for the closing hymn and benediction. That is all the movement that is really necessary if the service is properly arranged. Since many a layman complains bitterly about this matter, a minister would do well to consider it carefully.



Clarence Seidenspinner

The suggestion was made that a hymn be placed directly before the sermon. This ought always to be done. Somtimes a minister hopes to achieve a certain "tone" or "mood" by taking off after a soloist or choir has sung. This gives him a bad start, for he himself is a "solo" number. Th is nothing like a good congregatio base from which to preach. Does not know that the most complete un of mood is secured when all the p ple do something together? This best be done by pitching the pro mood through the use of a comm hymn. It may safely be put do that the man who fails to place hymn directly before the sermon much to learn about the technical pects of the act of worship.

● *Proper Selection Liturgical Materi*

Other mistakes occur in reg to the selection of such liturgical m terials as hymns and anthems. good order of service always beg with a movement of adoration presentation. Such a step in the se ice naturally calls for strong, jective hymns of adoration such "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God mighty" or "Ye watchers and ye h ones." Why then, are the tender, s jective hymns which reflect a Chr mysticism so often used? Their pro place in the worship is during pra or dedication. It ought to be down as a fixed canon of worship t the service should begin with an jective hymn to God. If an anth shortly follows the opening hymn is part of the general movement adoration, it too should be objecti Fortunately, the library of chu music is full of such material. T minister would do well to select t music with his choirmaster. Examp of what good, objective choral mu is available are: Glinka—Cherub Song; Bortniansky—Cherubim So Christiansen—Praise to the Lo Tkach—To Thee We Sing; Tsch nokoff—Praise Ye the Lord.

We may therefore say that in lecting the choral music for a serv the first hymn and anthem should objective. The second hymn and them may well be thematic. Th may amplify the note first soun in the scripture lesson and may ticipate the emphasis of the serm The third hymn, or the hymn wh follows the sermon, may be eith one of dedication or one of praise deity. A careful selection of t choral music is always in order.

● *Ceremonial the Servi*

A good many mistakes occur in t ceremonial of the service. When use the word "ceremonial" in relati

divine worship, we think primarily the action or etiquette or conduct the ministers of worship. Proper tion at the dinner table is definite. Most people know how to behave on ch occasions. The ceremonial of the rvice is just as well established.

The philosophy and practice of the remonial is based upon the presence God during the service. Since the ord is in his holy temple, complete verence throughout the entire serv- e ought to characterize the partici- nts. For the minister to act like a ng master instead of a priest, or ke a clown instead of a preacher, is forget the presence of God in the rvice. A man ought constantly to y to himself, "God is in his holy mple . . . He is here . . . now . . . this place . . . and I am a minister fore him . . . and the altar or holy ble is a sign of his presence."

Since the holy table is a symbol of God's presence, the ceremonial may planned in regard to its location. o disregard it is to make a mistake the etiquette of worship. The altar, holy table, is the central appoint- ent of the chancel. This is true in ther type of chancel arrangement. one type the altar stands at the ead of the apse with choir stalls, pul- t and lectern on either side. In the ther type of chancel the altar stands irectly below and in front of the mbo or pulpit. In either case, the cation is central and the ceremonial ay be planned accordingly.

● *Adoration and Dedication*

During the opening movement of doration it is proper for the minister stand directly before the holy table. When he is in that position, choir, eople and minister all face the altar. common mistake is for him to tand behind his ambo or in his pulpit or this part of the service, for the eason that this part is addressed to God. When the contemplative and nterpretive part of the service comes, he minister's place is at the ambo, ectern or in the pulpit. When the eriod of dedication comes and the ffering is to be presented, his place s again at the holy table. He receives he offering plates from the ushers in he presence of a standing congrega- ion, lifts them slightly as a gesture of resentation, and places them upon he table. It is incorrect to let the shers do this on their own, or to do while the people are seated.

It goes without saying—or does it?—that there should be no aimless novement of the minister, no consul- ation with the ushers or anyone else luring the service. Downright ir- everent and gauche is the intrusion f someone into the chancel to consult vith the minister during any hymn, nthem or act of adoration.

Closely associated with the ceremonial is the garb of the minister. Suffice it to say, that he will always be properly clothed when he conducts the service in a gown. All other types of dress are open to question.

● *Good Taste to be Observed*

This brings us to the matter of good taste in worship, a canon which is often violated. After all, worship is not entertainment. Only a few leaders will stoop to include in the service such unusual solo numbers as the saxophone, the vibraphone, the harmonica and the humble saw! Through the advertisement of that kind of show these men may hope to draw a crowd. Though we may avoid that kind of travesty, we may err in the matter of advertising "concert numbers" of one sort or another. This is to forget that the chief end of worship is the glory of God.

How often the church errs in the matter of good taste by choosing sentimental hymns, anthems and organ numbers, while a great library of noble and thrilling music is ready for use! Ministers sometimes try to justify this poor taste by saying that the good material is beyond the appreciation of the people. Perhaps they mean to say that they, personally, do not care for good music. Actually, most people know what good music is and they want it used during divine worship. Give it to them for a few months and they will never go back to the old.

The same principle may be applied to the selection of the other liturgical materials. God is so true, beautiful and righteous that it is simply indecent to offer him shoddy, sentimental poetry, illustrative material and music during the exercises of worship. Every item ought to be in the best possible taste. Let the scriptures be the guide, for they are strong, clean and beautiful. If a minister refuses to include any material in the service that could not be read or sung following the scriptures, he will not be likely to violate the standards of good taste. By thus avoiding this final mistake so commonly made in worship, he will preside at a service which may truly lead to fellowship between God and man.

The Cross Still Stands

THE CROSS still stands high o'er the strife
Of reddened brand and clashing steel;
The Cross still stands—O Tree of Life!
Whose leaves the suffering nations heal.
O, Fount, whence flows a crimson tide;
O, Source of grace, to none denied;
Sweet symbol of the Crucified—
The Cross of Christ still stands!

The Cross still stands against the sky
Of pain's dark night—of sorrow's tears;
The Cross still stands—uplifted high
Its beacon light of love appears—
Far-flung o'er life's tempestuous seas—
To guide frail, storm-tossed argosies
Into the Port of Perfect Peace—
The Cross of Christ still stands!

The Cross shall stand—our prop and stay
Though hearts run waste and courage fail;
The Cross shall stand though flesh decay
And death o'er mortal life prevail:
'Till wrong's last citadel shall fall—
'Till sin no more hold souls in thrall—
'Till Christ shall reign "crowned Lord of all"—
The Cross—His Cross—shall stand!

AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

• WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

BEGINNING his active ministry as director of the Wesley Foundation at the University of Pennsylvania, Rev. LLOYD E. FOSTER later held pastorates in Syracuse, N. Y., and East Orange, N. J., and three years ago accepted the pastorate of Old First Church (Presbyterian), Newark, N. J. This church was founded in 1666. His morning service is broadcast and he frequently broadcasts over the N.B.C. under Federal Council auspices. He also serves as a counselor on the Mediation Hour of the Mutual Broadcasting Company. He holds degrees from the University of Nebraska, Garrett Biblical Institute and the University of Chicago.

From 1915 to 1917 Rev. RALPH W. SOCKMAN *was* associate minister of Madison Avenue Methodist Church (now Christ Church), New York, and he has been minister there for twenty-seven years. He has a wide hearing through his weekly radio broadcasts. Among his recent books are *Recoveries in Religion, The Highway of God* and *Date With Destiny.*

Rev. A. GORDON NASBY *has ministered to churches* in Milwaukee and Madison, Wis., and in Chicago where he now leads the activities of Edison Park Lutheran Church. He received his later education at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn., Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., and at the Independent Seminary in Oslo, Norway. His book *Sunrise in the West* was recently published.

Reared in a Christian church in Iowa, Rev. EVERT E. ELLIS went to California and was a member of the Friends church for a time. He graduated from Whittier College in 1928, was in Y.M.C.A. work and in business for a few years, and was admitted to the California-Arizona conference of the Methodist Church in 1934. He graduated *(in absentia)* from Drew University, *magna cum laude,* in 1938 and also spent two summers at Union Seminary. He has ministered at North Glendale (Calif.) Methodist Church for the past seven years.

Rev. PAUL SCHERER *has ministered at Holy Trinity* Church (Lutheran), New York, for nearly a quarter century, and has broadcast for many years over the national chains. He is a favorite speaker at colleges and universities. Among his books are *Facts That Undergird Life* and *The Place Where Thou Standest.*

For the past eighteen years Rev. GEORGE A. BUTTRICK has been minister of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York city. He is the author of several books, his most recent volume, *Prayer,* having been greeted as one of the most significant books on that subject in many years. Dr. Buttrick served for a year as president of the Federal Council of Churches.

Rev. KENNETH BROOKES, *whose father, Rev. George* S. Brookes, is pastor of the Union Congregational Church, Rockville, Conn., was educated at Yale College, Bangor Theological Seminary and the University of Maine. Since 1943 he has ministered at Second Congregational Church, Westfield, Mass.

Rev. DAVID OWENS *is professor of philosophy and* lecturer in Christian ethics in the United College, Winnipeg, Can.

Rev. CLARENCE SEIDENSPINNER *is minister of the* First Methodist Church, Racine, Wis., and the author of *Form and Freedom in Worship.*

Rev. CLARENCE F. AVEY *is minister of Starre* Memorial Methodist Church, Athol, Mass.

TITLES AND TEXTS — What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

ROBERT G. REITER, St. Paul Lutheran, Newville, Pa. "Knowing the Unknowable." Eph. 3:19a—". . . to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge . . ."

CHARLES W. KEIRSTEAD, Trinity Congregational, Lawrence, Mass. "Expanding Horizons." Mark 16:15—"Go ye into all the world . . ."

ROBERT C. STANGER, Bethel Evangelical and Reformed, Detroit, Mich. "What is the Church's Task?" Isa. 40:9—"O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold you God!"

H. V. ELLISON, Knox United, Roblin, Man., Can. "Ou Spiritual Dynamic." Col. 1:27—"Christ in you th hope of glory."

REUBEN A. TANQUIST, First Methodist, Wagner, S. D "God's Ultimatum." Rev. 2:16—"Repent, or else . .

MALCOLM L. ROWE, Park Methodist, Hamilton, N. Y "What On Earth Is God Doing?" Psalm 10:1-"Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? why hide thou thyself in times of trouble?"

E. K. RESLER, First Methodist, Marysville, Kan. "Th Christian Program." Matt. 10:7,8—"And as ye g preach, saying, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand; he the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast ou demons; freely ye received, freely give."

KENNETH S. LEAREY, First Methodist, Van Wert, O "Liberation Through Integrity." John 8:32—". . and the truth will set you free."

EDWARD W. STIMSON, Knox Presbyterian, Cincinnat "Before the Lights Come on Again." Isa. 26:9-"When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitan of the world will learn righteousness."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

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Title of sermon

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Text used (write out the text)

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Name of minister

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Name of church

. . . . . .

Address

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

THE meeting in the Crimea of the heads of the three allied nations will become historic. Its agreements point the direction in which it is ɔped these great powers will move unitedly into the ɔstwar world. The joint statement signed by Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt reveals a plan to divide Germany into occupational spheres, in each of which one power will assume responsibility for police ɔntrol. The Curzon Line is to be the eastern boun-ary of Poland and a part of Germany is to be added) her territory on the west. A formula was found ɔr the government of Poland. It provides for the roadening of the present Lublin provisional govern-ıent by including "other democratic leaders" from ithin Poland and from the London Polish cabinet hich we and Britain have recognized as the true overnment of that country. Free democratic elec-ons are promised "as soon as possible." On the mat-r of a world organization, the leaders again regis-ered their approval and arranged for another con-erence of the United Nations to be held in San Fran-isco to fashion such an organization "along the lines f the provisional conversations at Dumbarton Oaks." hint that Russia may eventually participate in the ar against Japan seems to be implied in the fact hat the date for the United Nations conference is set or April 25, the day before Russia's treaty with Japan xpires; and also in the fact that Russia will join ith China in "sponsoring" the conference. It will be ecalled that Russia refused to sit with China at Dum-arton Oaks, because she was not at war with Japan.

Historic Conference

The Book of the Month

THIS IS JUDAISM. *By Ferdinand M. Isserman. Willett, Clark & Company, $2.50.*

RABBI ISSERMAN is known throughout the nation as one of our most distinguished and powerful preachers. His intellectual breadth nd rich experience equip him in an unusual way to nterpret his religious faith to both Jews and gentiles. His book is addressed to the members of his great ynagogue in St. Louis and was prompted by its au-hor's felt need of a comprehensive statement of the aith as held by Reform Judaism. Yet Dr. Isserman eeps constantly in mind his "Christian friends" who, think, must equal in number those of his own faith. A novel and homely starting point is indicated by his ery first sentence, which is the question: "Do you at ham?" Because some Jews do, and some do not, he author is plunged at once into the problem of ex-laining how those who do can reconcile this practice vith the literal words of the Torah which plainly orbids it. This leads him into an examination of the istory of Judaism from its primitive semitism to its igh peak of development in prophetism. The results of modern Christian and Jewish scholarship are drawn upon to show the progressive character of the divine revelation as recorded in the Old Testament, thus making bare literalism morally and intellectually impossible. This done, Rabbi Isserman devotes the second section to the theology of Judaism, and the final section to its application to life. His discussion of the place of Jesus in Judaism is remarkable for its frankness, its courage and its sympathetic imagination. No Christian reader will be satisfied with the treatment here, but he will be grateful to discover that with such Jewish minds as Dr. Isserman's there exists a common basis for conversation at this crucial point where the historic pathways of the two faiths diverge.

A Thought for the Month

AT ALL TIMES, but especially in this time of war, the minister is called upon to bring consolation to the bereaved and sorrowful. Bereaved parents and loved ones who have just received the fateful telegram turn their thoughts instinctively to their minister. How shall he bring comfort to the members of a home so stricken? Not all ministers are sensitive and wise in such situations. Some talk too much. They are under an illusion as to the comforting value of words. Sorrow is best assuaged by a catharsis of the emotions, and this comes by pouring itself out into the understanding ear of a friend. The minister is a friend, but he is also a symbol. In the thought of the community he stands for something above and beyond himself. Yet I think he should not be unduly conscious of his vocational symbolism when he enters the house of grief. His human friendship, unembarrassed by his profession, should be paramount in his own consciousness. He can trust the symbolism of his calling to evoke its best response if he does not unduly obtrude it in such an hour. If there is a friendly act of practical help, even a simple chore, which he can perform, he will offer to do it. All this is common human friendliness, but it is translated into a Christian meaning by the symbolism with which the minister is regarded. His explicit interpretation of the meaning of sorrow, and of the high Christian way of accepting it, will be more effective if expressed in less personal ways—in his sermon or prayer at church, in a letter written when the first onrush of grief has begun to subside, and in later visits, when the thoughts of the bereaved are more calm and objective. Sorrow, like all the deeper sanctities of life, is likely to cover itself with silence. But when it becomes articulate it is asking not so much for a response in words or preachments as for the listening of a sympathetic and understanding friend.

Comforting the Sorrowful

Charles Clayton Morrison

OUTLINE STUDIES IN MARK

John L. Hill

A devotional study of Jesus as found in the Gospel of Mark. Dr. Hill concentrates on the facts about Jesus that have always meant the most to Christians. The outline plan is most helpful and enables the ordinary reader to get in mind the structure of the Gospel.

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Charles W. Turner

Here is the first full-length biography to be written in English of the famous Brazilian crusader for the essential freedoms. His story is inseparable from that of his native land, and reading it, we are able to know that important South American republic as we never knew it before. This is a fascinating story, as well as a vital, interesting link in American history.

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THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

Georgia Harkness

Millions today "sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." This book is written for those among them who have seriously tried, but without success, to overcome depressions by means of religious faith. Helpfully relating the insights of psychiatry to the experience of some of the great saints, the author interprets in its modern setting a problem peculiar to the best of men. Assurance is here that "there is a way forward and out of the dark."

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